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The seventh meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1918 was held in its office at 1729 New York Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D. C., on Friday, March 1st, 1918.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore,- the Chairman:

" Olmsted;

" Adams;

" Platt;

" Weir;

" Pope; also

Colonel C. S. Ridley, U. S. Army, the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a. m., and immediately proceeded to the business before it.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on December 21, 1917, and of the Committee meeting held in New York City on January 18, 1918, were approved.

2. RESOLUTION IN APPRECIATION OF SERVICES OF COLONEL

WILLIAM W. HARTS, U. S. A.: The Commission unanimously adopted the following resolution, and requested the Secretary to transmit a copy to the former Secretary of the Commission, Colonel Wm. W. Harts, United States Army, now Brigadier General with the Army in France:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts place on record their appreciation of the services of Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Wm. W. Harts, the Secretary and Executive Officer of the Commission from October, 1913, until the expiration of his detail as Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds on September 24, 1917, when he assumed command of the Sixth Regiment of Engineers. The members personally and individually parted from Colonel Harts with feelings of the liveliest regard and affection when he went to accomplish the highest duties of a soldier. They appreciate the agreeable associations with him in the work of the Commission; and especially they feel that his intelligent and persistent devotion to the improvement of Washington as the National Capital was effective both with Congress and also with the large number of citizens who came under his persuasive influence.

3. LETTER FROM STATE ARCHITECT OF CALIFORNIA, ASKING COMMISSION TO ACT AS ARBITERS IN CONTROVERSY: The following letter was laid before the Commission:

State of California
DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING
Sacramento

February 11, 1918.

Commission of Fine Arts,
Col. C. S. Ridley, Secretary,
1729 New York Avenue,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

During the latter half of 1915, a competition was held for the selection of an Architect for the San Francisco State Building which is to be erected on a site owned by the State in the Civic Center, San Francisco, California. The program was officially approved by the American Institute of Architects and the result of the competition was the selection of the firm of Bliss and Faville of San Francisco, and the adoption of their design as submitted. The Architects so selected have proceeded under the direction of the State Department of Engineering, with the making of the working drawings and specifications which are now ready for taking bids.

The law authorizing the construction of the building requires that these plans and specifications, before any work is commenced, be approved by the San Francisco State Building Commission, which Commission is composed of the Governor, the Attorney General and the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court.

Following the announcement of award in the competition, adverse criticism of the principal facade of the accepted design was launched by Mr. Willis Polk, who was not a competitor and in which criticism he has had some support, including several of the Architects who participated in the competition. The criticism referred to is based on Section No. 5 of the program, which was mandatory and reads as follows:

"It is mandatory that the design of the State Building shall be in harmony with the three monumental buildings already constructed or in course of construction on the Civic Center, as above described; the height above grade of the cornice of the State Building must be about seventy feet (70'0"), which is practically the height of the cornices on the City Hall, the Auditorium and the Library."

In order that an impartial opinion may be obtained on the merits of the criticism, it has been suggested that the matter be submitted to an outside body, such as your Commission, and the State Commission and Messrs. Bliss and Faville will be agreeable to receiving an expression from your Honorable Body.

The State Commission has instructed me to communicate with you with the view of ascertaining if you are willing to make an examination of the drawings for the San Francisco State Building and of suitable illustrations, by drawings and photographs, of the existing buildings, and on the basis of this examination, state if, in your judgment, the design of the principal facade of the proposed building would conflict or be out of harmony with the existing buildings.

In replying to this communication, will you please state also what conditions as to probable length of time required and expense involved, will be connected with your service.

Yours, very truly,
(Signed) Geo. B. McDougall,
State Architect.

CBMc:KD-K

CC - Governor W. D. Stephens,
Attorney General Webb,
Chief Justice Angellotti.

The members agreed that, while they were without authority officially to act in this matter, they desired as a matter of courtesy to assist the State of California. They felt that the request of the California State Architect should, however, bear the indorsement of the Senators from that State, and so informed the State Architect. The matter has been taken up with Senators Phelan and Johnson, and upon their endorsement will be taken up by the Commission. The official reply of the Commission is shown under Exhibit A.

4. GRADING PLANS FOR EAST AND WEST SEATON PARK AND HENRY PARK: Colonel Ridley submitted four plans, namely a walk profile, (338.32) two drive profiles, (338.33, 338.34), and a street profile, (338.35), for East and West Seaton Park and Henry Park, prepared by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. These were approved. Grading plans (338.31) submitted at the same time for these parks were subjected to minor criticisms, but are to be approved when modifications are made to the satisfaction of Mr. Olmsted who was appointed a committee with power in this matter.

5. SITE FOR ERICSSON MEMORIAL: At the last official conference with the representatives of the Ericsson Memorial lay commission in New York City on January 18th last, when it was found that no site proposed by either that committee or the Fine Arts Commission was considered acceptable, it was agreed that the Commission would continue to study the situation and see whether there is a site which they would consider satisfactory for the purpose and could, therefore, recommend to the committee. Upon calling this matter to the attention of the Commission, Mr. Platt stated that Mr. Bergquist, one of the three members of the lay committee

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which had been in conference with the Commission, had approached him with the proposition that a memorial fountain near the Lincoln Memorial, to be called the "Ericsson Memorial", would be acceptable to them and that they would like to have Mr. Bacon, the Architect of the Lincoln Memorial, to design it. The Commission considered this suggestion a very good one, and left it in Mr. Platt's hands to inform Mr. Bergquist that the Commission would be favorable to such a course of action. As such a step, if carried out, would solve the problem, no further action on the site is to be taken until Mr. Platt has conferred with Mr. Bergquist again. (See Exhibit B.)

6. ARLINGTON FARMS PROJECT: Dr. L. C. Corbett, Mr. Betts of the Bureau of Public Roads, Mr. Mulford, Mr. Morris, and Mr. Beckerman, from the Department of Agriculture, conferred with the Commission at ten o'clock, on a general plan with rider, three elevations of separate buildings, and one general elevation of proposed buildings of the Arlington Farms project, regarding which they had been in consultation with the Commission for some time. The group plan was considered simple and well-ordered as such a farm plan should be, and the design for the individual buildings was considered good. The Commission was pleased with the showing, and approved the grouping of the buildings and general layout, the understanding being that copies were to be furnished them formally by the Secretary of Agriculture. On the question as to whether the buildings should have single windows or groups of windows, the Commission favored the plan as drawn with group windows.

7. KEY MODEL: Colonel Ridley, as personal representative of the Secretary of War, stated that the sculptor for the Key Memorial at Baltimore, Maryland, (Mr. Niehaus), has completed the full-sized model for the figure for that memorial and also the model for the pedestal, and that these were ready for the inspection of the Commission. Mr. Adams was appointed a Committee to make this inspection, to associate with himself any other member or members of the Commission in the inspection. It was understood that this inspection should be made with Colonel Ridley, and arrangements for it were to be made by him.

H6-324.4

8. MONTROSE PARK: The detailed drawings of the proposed entrance treatment (P.B. & G. plans No.) were examined, and the general layout of the brickwork approved with the suggestion that the pool coping be constructed of flag-stone instead of brick.

9. HARVARD PARK: A new design for this park (P.B. & G. No. 1-16-309 C4) was submitted. The double walk along the Sixteenth street side was approved, but the formal development shown in the center was eliminated. A sketch was then prepared (P. B. & G. No. 1-16-309-C-6) with a smaller fountain at the lower point of the park with walks connecting from the other two corners, and this sketch was approved.

10. MERIDIAN HILL PARK: The plan (P. B. & G. No. _____) of the Park, redrawn to meet the advice and criticism of the Commission, was approved, as was a sheet of general elevations and sections (P. B. & G. _____). A planting plan for the space between the two walls on Sixteenth Street (P. B. & G. _____) was submitted for approval after having been gone over in detail by Mr. Olmsted, and no criticisms were offered. Working drawings of the new South entrance, the general design for which had been previously approved, were displayed for such supplementary suggestions as would be of value in preparing the details, but none were made.

11. RESERVATIONS 321, 70, 312-B, 309-G, 322, 172-A, 23, and 22: Tentative plans prepared by the office of Public Buildings and Grounds for presentation to the Appropriations Committees of Congress, were laid before the Commission for comment and criticism, and the following suggestions made:

RESERVATION 321: It was suggested that this Park be maintained as a playground for the present. The grounds should be cleaned up, although the small locust trees can be retained. The sidewalks should be put in order, and the benches placed in the parking space between the trees on Quincy Street. (1-16-321,3-)

RESERVATION 70: which adjoins new Representative Methodist Episcopal Church: A co-operative development was proposed, but after consideration action was postponed until the situation could be studied further. (1-6-70.3-)

RESERVATION 312-B: A shelter had been requested on this reservation by patrons of the car-line, but was objected to by the owner of an adjoining store. In criticising the proposed design, the omission of the covered seat was recommended, but it was thought objectionable and probably desirable to have and uncovered, recessed somewhat into the reservation from the sidewalk and backed up by a hedge. It was thought very desirable to plant at once about three or four large-growing spreading trees such as sycamores in the triangle, and also a surrounding hedge and perhaps some supplementary minor planting.

RESERVATION 309-G: The scheme, for an enclosed area with seats, shade and play space, was considered good. Suggestions for additions of a few more trees were made. (1-16-309G.3.)

RESERVATION 322: It was recommended that a new plan be submitted, more shade and a fountain to be included in the new scheme. (1-16-322.4)

RESERVATION 172-A: Approved in general with suggestions for minor changes pointed out in the plan, such as that gravelled areas be developed between sidewalks. (1-4-172A-)

RESERVATION 23: was not criticised, and RESERVATION 22 was criticised to the effect that the openings shown should be widened to give better proportions to step, and that sharp points of hedge shown should be reduced. (1-4-22.3 and 23.3,-)

12. NUNS OF THE BATTLEFIELD MONUMENT: After an interval for lunch, which was served in the office, the Commission went to the studio of Mr. Jerome Connor, sculptor, at 31 C street, S. E., to see the model of the monument to the Nuns of the Battlefield. A bill to permit the erection of this memorial in the City of Washington is pending before Congress, and the sculptor is working on his preliminary studies in order to have them available should inquiry be made as to the type of memorial proposed. The Commission considered the preliminary study satisfactory.

13. GRADING PLANS FOR GOLF COURSE IN POTOMAC PARK: Mr. Olmsted, after looking over the grading plans for golf course in East Potomac Park, advised that action should not be taken until after a conference with the golf expert, or his representative, as it is desirable to work out with him slight alterations on grading plan in conformity with his ideas as to exact elevations for his hazards, greens and tees. This should be done as quickly as possible.

14. Later the Commission visited the temporary building of the War Department in Henry Park, after which Mr. Olmsted with Colonel Ridley, accompanied by Mr. Small, landscape designer in the office of Public Buildings and Grounds, visited a number of reservations, development of which is proposed. The advice given was that shade be provided and seats arranged so as to make these parks useful to the people in their vicinity.

There being no further business before the meeting, the Commission adjourned at 4 p. m., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Approved; _____
Chairman.

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

March 5, 1918.

Dear Sir:

This is a reply to your letter of February 11th regarding the possibility of obtaining the opinion of the National Commission of Fine Arts as to whether Section 5, of the programme of competition to secure an architect to design the State Building for the San Francisco Civic Center has been carried out in the accepted design.

This Commission desires, as a matter of courtesy, to comply with such a request as yours, provided they can be of real assistance to a State or Civic organization. They are more concerned about being helpful than about technicalities as to their jurisdiction - for unquestionably they are without even a semblance of authority to act in such a matter. As a matter of courtesy due from the National Commission to the representatives of California in Congress, however, this Commission feels that your request should be indorsed by the California Senators. To that end, your letter has been referred to Senators Phelan and Johnson, for an expression of their pleasure in the premises.

If the Commission decide that they can act, there will be no charges beyond those you may incur in presenting the matter. The length of time required would depend on the clearness of the presentation. By conjecture, not to exceed one day, should dispose of the subject. The meeting could be held in Washington or in New York City.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) CHARLES MOORE.

Chairman.

Hon. George B. McDougall,
State Architect,
Sacramento, California.

CM:MG.

EXHIBIT A.

March 5th, 1918.

Dear Mr. Eckberg:

Replying to your letter in regard to the Ericsson Memorial: The suggestion made by you that your Committee select Mr. Bacon to design the memorial is entirely satisfactory to the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Bacon has proved his ability to accomplish a monumental building of the first order: and if your Committee were to get him to do your work the result would doubtless be lastingly satisfactory. With him as a designer the question of location could be taken up with assurance of an appropriate site. Can you get a unanimous support from your Committee for your suggestion?

Very truly, yours,

(Signed) CHARLES MOORE,

Chairman.

S. Adolf Eckberg, Esq.,
175-Fifth Avenue,
New York.

CM/RB:MG.

EXHIBIT B.

March 25th, 1912.

Dear Mr. Eckberg:

Replying to your letter in regard to the
 Princeton Memorial: The suggestion made by you that your
 Committee select Mr. Bacon to design the memorial is entire-
 ly satisfactory to the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Bacon
 has proved his ability to accomplish a monumental building
 of the first order; and if your Committee were to get him to do
 your work the result would doubtless be festively satisfactory.
 With him as a designer the question of location could be taken
 up with assurance of an appropriate site. Can you get a mani-
 fest support from your Committee for your suggestion?

Very truly, yours,

(Signed) CHARLES MOORE,

Chairman.

S. Adolf Eckberg, Esq.,
 175 Fifth Avenue,
 New York.

CEM:MS.

EXHIBIT B.